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Pam-biog

Moody Mrs. Betsey

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"And so the word had breath and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds
More strong than any poet's thought."

The subject of this sketch, who, in the later years of her hale old age, was known far and near by the affectionate title of "Grandma Moody," was born in the township of Northfield, Franklin county, Massachusetts, on the fifth day of February, 1805. Even at that early day her family, the descendants of William Holton, had been long settled in the upper Connecticut valley. William Holton, himself born in the colony of Massachusetts Bay of Pilgrim stock, was a member of the general court of Massachusetts and of the committee thereof charged with the duty of laying off the plantation of Northfield, of

which he became a settler. For many years after the settlement the region was much exposed to Indian incursions, and in this stern school of the pioneer and patriot was developed that type of character, courageous and sympathetic, but wary, persistent and practical, which to this day has its honorable exemplars in the descendants of those settlers.

Here, a true daughter of the soil, and inheriting the sturdy strength, and clean conscientiousness of a virtuous and industrious ancestry, Betsey Holton was born. Here, too, in the practice of these primal virtues she lived out her long and useful life, and here, full of years and honor, she fell asleep.

In her twenty-third year, January 3, 1828, Betsey Holton was married to Edwin Moody, also of pioneer stock in the township of Northfield. Of this marriage were born nine children, seven sons and two daughters; and on May 28, 1841, Edwin Moody died. With the loss of her husband began the heroic struggle with adverse circumstances which brought into exercise the strength of mind and the latent heroism of Mrs. Moody's character.

Not only were Edwin Moody's affairs found to be involved, but even the little hill farm in Northfield which was the homestead was mortgaged, and one month after

his death the two youngest children a boy and girl were born. At this time her eldest child, a daughter, was not yet thirteen years of age. Dwight Lyman, the sixth child, who has since become the evangelist of world-wide fame, was then less than five years old. Stripped of all resources except a mortgaged home, and advised by many to bind out her children, Mrs. Moody, trusting in the promises of God to the widow and the fatherless, resolved to hold her family together. In speaking of this time of trial she said: "I knew that God had given those children to me, and that He would be a Father to them if I would do a mother's part."

And bravely, cheerfully, patiently, she did that part until, grown old enough to help and then to support her, her children lifted from her all care about material things, while repaying her years of toil and privation with unbounded respect and devotion.

With the rising fame of her son Dwight, Northfield became a unique gathering place for the great and the good of all lands, and of these multitudes many sought the presence and counsels of this wise, serene and strong mother in Israel. Soon came the establishment of the great Northfield institutions, the Seminary, Mount Hermon School, and, later, the Training School; and the

quiet little New England farm village, with no impairment of its singular beauty and charm, began to thrill with the pulsations of a new life.

Now, at last, the wider ministry of this ripened character began. Strong as the granite of the hills which had formed the horizon of her life, and sweet and peaceful as the smiling valley which those hills inclose, she sat in the home which had sheltered her for sixty-eight years, the birthplace of her children, and the scene of her sorrows and her joys, and received all who came. It is not too much to say that she wrought for lasting good in thousands of lives. Like her Father, she was no respecter of persons. In her large simplicity and unconsciousness of self, the great and the small were alike to her. World-famous men from over sea, and boys and girls from the schools, all were received with the same perfect courtesy and sympathy. She rejoiced far more in the integrity and usefulness of her celebrated son than in his great fame, for she well knew that to be was of greater moment than to do. For that reason largely she held her children in equal esteem, for she knew that in all of them were the same essential virtues.

Nothing was more beautiful in Mrs. Moody's later life than her sympathy with the young. She seemed never

to grow old in heart, and her interest in the schools and in the students personally was very great.

About one week before her death, Mrs. Moody took a slight cold, and on Friday, January 24, she took to her bed. Though none of her symptons were alarming it was thought prudent to summon the family physician. Her malady was pronounced to be grippe. She seemed wholly free from suffering, the marked symptom being simply a desire to sleep. It soon became evident that the fingers of God were pressing down her tired eyelids, and that He was about to give His beloved sleep. All the family were summoned, and all were with her at the last except her daughter Lizzie, Mrs. Washburn of Racine, Wisconsin. Dwight had been conducting meetings in Philadelphia, but arrived late Saturday afternoon and was fully recognized by his mother.

On Sunday morning, January 26, 1896, at half-past eleven, in the presence of her children and grandchildren, "Grandma Moody" fell asleep in Jesus. She lacked but twelve days of attaining the great age of ninety-one. It was a good fight finished.

The Burial.

The burial was fixed for Wednesday, January 29. At quarter past nine the family only gathered at the old homestead, and Mr. Dwight L. Moody offered prayer. The body was then taken, the grandsons acting as bearers, to Revell Cottage, one of the buildings of Northfield Seminary, where it was received by the teachers and young ladies of the Seminary and of the Training School, who acted as an escort to the Congregational church, of which Mrs. Moody was a member. There the features were viewed by the hundreds of students, neighbors and friends.

The whole service was filled with an indescribable feeling of victory and triumph. Sorrow there was, deep and sincere, but no sense of regret or of defeat. Death indeed had no victory. As the family entered the church the choir and congregation sang "Blessed Hope," and the hymns used all bore the impress of confident assurance.

Speaking from I Corinthians xv: 55, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" the pastor, Rev. C. I. Scofield, said in part:

To Paul more than to any other of the writers of the New Testament there seemed to be given a sense of the victoriousness of the Christian's faith. Nothing could keep him from exultation, triumph, defiant glorying in Christ. He reminds us of Elijah, alone against the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, but so sure beforehand of the power of his God that he could afford to taunt them with the impotency of theirs. And yet to none other of the writers was it given to fathom so profoundly the abyss of guilt and ruin into which the race is plunged. He evades nothing, closes his eyes to nothing, shuts his mind to no deepest problem of mystery and despair. His exultation is not gained by the cheap process of refusing to see the utter worst that can be said. This thoroughness gives us confidence. It fills his shout of victory with reality, while it empties it of bravado.

You know how, in this spirit, he faces in the Romans the whole case against man as guilty and undone. He defines that gospel of which he is not ashamed because it is the power of God unto salvation as being not only the

revelation of the righteousness of God to faith, but also as the revelation of the wrath of God from heaven against all unrighteousness of men. And then all humanity passes before us to see if haply we may find a righteous man. First the degraded heathen, and then the cultured heathen, and then the Jew; and then he sums up the case against man with crushing thoroughness. He enters a plea of guilty to every charge. The final indictment is terrific. Throat, tongue, lips, mouth, feet, eyes, ways—with and in all these we are guilty. As if that were not enough he bids Sinai to speak. In our guilt we hear the thunder of the law: "What things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God."

Alas, if that were God's last word as well as man's! But just when we are ready to call Romans an epistle of despair Paul erects over against Sinai the great red cross and shows us how atonement makes way for justifying grace, and then, height beyond height, through peace, and grace, and joy, he mounts until at last he brings us out upon the great glory-lighted plateau of the eighth of Romans and there shouts "Victory!" and flings back his triumphant defiance: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth."

Even in that breathless moment so sane is the Spirit in this man that he is not suffered to forget the sorrows and trials of life. He looks at these: "tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or sword," shall these separate us from the love of Christ? Nay, in all these things also we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

Now in the same fearless way Paul faces the whole problem of death. He does not deny it. He does not garland the grave, nor say sentimental things about it. He will not trifle with breaking hearts, nor medicine them with either poetical or pious fictions. "In Adam all die." Even Christ must die. The victory of death is confessed. It is Romans over again: "And so death passed upon all men." And he says that death is an enemy. Death is an abnormal thing. It was no part of the primal purpose that God's creation should be ridged with graves and drenched in blood and tears. Paul states the case for death as strongly as it can be stated.

But just when we are ready to salute the implacable fates and crown death victor, the cross is upreared again, and again we are more than conquerors. There is a second man, a last Adam, who infinitely more than restores the lost Eden of the first. We go down to the very

grave to sing our song of victory. "It is sown." Yes. But "sown" is not ruined. "Sown" speaks of harvest. "Sown" is a pregnant, prophetic word. Out of it the apostle gets his series of victorious antitheses:

It is sown in	It is raised in
corruption,	*incorruption*,
dishonor,	*glory*,
natural,	*spiritual*,
earthy,	*heavenly*,

and right there over the very grave, in the very presence of seeming defeat, we triumph once more in the mighty word RESURRECTION. Tears and the open grave cannot let him of this boasting.

You know how in Second Corinthians he returns to this theme, the strong, joyous Christian doctrine of death. It begins, "We know," (II Cor. v: 1) and proceeds, "we are always confident," and "we are willing." Death is defined. On the physical side it is the letting down of a worn tent—for that is a literal rendering of the passage: "if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved" —on the spiritual side it is "present with the Lord." Instantly! No room here for the unconscious, apathetic abode of soul and spirit in the grave. The eyes of our

sister closed to earth last Lord's day morning and instantly opened in glory.

This is Christ's doctrine. "The beggar died." He does not stop to tell us what they did with the beggar's body, but He hastens to tell us where the beggar was—"and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." And then the words drop down like celestial music, "Lazarus *is comforted.*"

With all my soul I protest against the heathenizing which one sees everywhere of our beautiful Christian doctrine of death. It is a legacy of mediævalism and monkery. The Catacombs knew nothing of this gloom; of broken columns, and inverted torches, and sable plumes. When the day's butchery in the arena was done the early Christians put their martyred dead in the grave and wrote over them the inscriptions which you may read there to-day: "Alexander lives above the stars," "Prudentia conquers." The cloister, not the catacombs, degraded our Christian doctrine of death.

Then, to crown all, in First Thessalonians we are told that resurrection is the work of our Coming Lord, and hence is possible at any moment. He may tarry, but so, too, He may come this very day.

And so, friends, we are not gathered here to mourn a

defeat, but even through tears to lift up our banners and cry, "O death, where is thy sting; O grave, where is thy victory." A good fight has been fought, a good course run, the faith kept. "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

It would savor of impertinence for me, recently come among you, and one who entered so slightly into Mrs. Moody's life to speak to you, her relatives, friends and neighbors, in detail of that life. You know these things better than I.

But because my vision of her is free from memory of confusing details, perhaps it has been given to me to see some of the larger outlines and harmonious proportions of that character.

It seems to me that the doric simplicity and majesty of her character was due largely to this, that, untroubled by the complexities of our latter day life, she possessed the great elemental virtues.

What *courage* she had! True courage is compounded of endurance with cheerfulness. How uncomplainingly she lifted the sore burden of poverty, debt, toil. How cheerfully she bore it until loving hands, nourished into strength by herself, lifted it away. The real battles of

womanly life are not out in the open field where the thunder of the guns and the shout of the captains fill the air. They are by kitchen and cradle. There she fought and conquered.

How beautiful against the darkening background of latter day eagerness to be quickly rich by any means glows this widow's *stainless integrity*. She could toil, and did, but she could not cozen and cheat and lie, and make debts for others to pay.

And our times, too, furnish a foil for her simple *womanliness*. The modern unrest and egotism and craving for applause never entered her heart. To be a woman and fill a woman's place was enough. She could have thought of no place higher than that of wife and mother. And so she had peace, and so she came to an influence which is to-day felt in every part of the inhabited earth. She takes her place with the historic mothers, with the mother of the Wesleys and of Augustine. No self-conscious restlessness could have brought her that crown. It seems to me that if her life has one lesson supreme above all others it is that it is not open to mortal to do a greater thing than to rear a child for God.

She glorified American motherhood and motherhood

transfigured her. It pleased God to give one of her sons world-wide distinction. Of this she had a premonition. She often said that one of her sons would rise to great usefulness. When it came she was modestly thankful, but the work she did as mother was so equally done for all her children that in essential character the celebrated child does not differ from his brothers and sisters.

But after all, is not this the crowning lesson of this long life now ended, and does not its impressiveness lie in this, that her character was wrought out and her life work done in what would seem to many narrow and adverse circumstances? Ninety-one years ago there was no railroad, no telegraph, no daily paper, and, in the farmhouses of Massachusetts, but few books. We think of money as desirable for our children. But here in the circle of these hills, without influence, without book learning, without money, God brought our sister to this greatness.

Best of all, she was unconscious of it. It may be said of her she "wist not." Tested by poverty she came forth from the trial unsoured; tested by attention and flattery and ease—she would never abide luxury—she came forth unspoiled.

May this strong, simple, wise, brave woman become

through her memory to us, what in life she was to her children, an illustration of that faith in God which leads to high, clean, simple, useful living, and triumphant dying.

At the conclusion of the pastor's remarks Mrs. William R. Moody sang Tennyson's

Crossing the Bar.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place,
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

Mr. Dwight L. Moody's Tribute to His Mother.

When Mrs. William R. Moody had concluded her song "Crossing the Bar," Mr. Dwight L. Moody rose from his place with the family and, bearing in his hands the old family Bible, and a worn book of devotions, came forward. Standing by the body of his mother, he said:

It is not the custom, perhaps, for a son to take part in such an occasion. If I can control myself I would like to say a few words. It is a great honor to be the son of such a mother. I do not know where to begin; I could not praise her enough. In the first place my mother was a very wise woman. In one sense she was wiser than Solomon; she knew how to bring up her children. She had nine children and they all loved their home. She won their hearts, their affections, she could do anything with them.

Whenever I wanted real sound counsel I used to go to my mother. I have traveled a good deal and seen a good many mothers, but I never saw one who had such tact as she had. She so bound her children to her that

it was a great calamity to have to leave home. I had two brothers that lived in Kansas and died there. Their great longing was to get back to their mother. My brother who died in Kansas a short time ago had been looking over the Greenfield papers for some time to see if he could not buy a farm in this locality. He had a good farm there, but he was never satisfied; he wanted to get back to mother. That is the way she won her family, she won them to herself.

I have heard something within the last forty-eight hours that nearly broke my heart. I merely mention it to show what a character she was. My eldest sister, her oldest daughter, told me that the first year after my father died she wept herself to sleep every night. Yet she was always bright and cheerful in the presence of her children, and they never knew anything about it. Her sorrows drove her to Him, and in her own room, after we were asleep, I would wake up and hear her praying, and sometimes I would hear her weeping. She would be sure her children were all asleep before she would pour out her tears.

And there was another thing remarkable about my mother. If she loved one child more than another no one ever found it out. Isaiah, he was her first boy; she

could not get along without Isaiah. And Cornelia, she was her first girl; she could not get along without Cornelia, for she had to take care of the twins. And George, she couldn't live without George. What could she ever have done without George? He staid right by her through thick and thin. She couldn't live without George. And Edwin, he bore the name of her husband. And Dwight, I don't know what she thought of him. And Luther, he was the dearest of all, because he had to go away to live. He was always homesick to get back to mother. And Warren, he was the youngest when father died; it seemed as if he was dearer than all the rest. And Sam and Lizzie, the twins, they were the light of her great sorrow.

She never complained of her children. It is a great thing to have such a mother, and I feel like standing up here to-day to praise her. And just here I want to say before I forget it, you don't know how she appreciated the kindness which was shown her in those days of early struggle. Sometimes I would come home and say such a man did so and so, and she would say, "Don't say that, Dwight; he was kind to me."

My father died a bankrupt, and the creditors came and swept everything we had. They took everything,

even the kindling wood; and there came on a snowstorm, and the next morning mother said we would have to stay in bed until school time because there was no wood to make a fire. Then all at once I heard some one chopping wood, and it was my Uncle Sam. I tell you I have always had a warm heart for that uncle for that act. And that night there came the biggest load of wood I ever saw in my life. It took two yoke of oxen to draw it. It was that uncle that brought it. That act followed me all through life, and a good many acts, in fact. Mr. Everett, the pastor of the Unitarian church, I remember how kind he was in those days. I want to testify to-day how my mother appreciated that.

I remember the first thing I did to earn money was to turn the neighbor's cows up on Strowbridge Mountain. I got a cent a week for it. I never thought of spending it on myself. It was to go to mother. It went into the common treasury. And I remember when George got work we asked who was going to milk the cows. Mother said she would milk. She also made our clothes, and wove the cloth, and spun the yarn, and darned our stockings; and there was never any complaining.

I thought so much of my mother I cannot say half enough. That dear face! There was no sweeter face

on earth. Fifty years I have been coming back and was always glad to get back. When I got within fifty miles of home I always grew restless and walked up and down the car. It seemed to me as if the train would never get to Northfield. For sixty-eight years she has lived on that hill, and when I came back after dark I always looked to see the light in mother's window. When I got home last Saturday night—I was going to take the four o'clock train from New York and get here at twelve; I had some business to do; but I suppose it was the good Lord that sent me; I took the twelve o'clock train and got here at five—I went in to my mother. I was so glad I got back in time to be recognized. I said, "Mother, do you know me?" She said, "I *guess* I *do*!" I like that word, that Yankee word "guess!" The children were all with her when she was taking her departure. At last I called, "Mother, mother." No answer. She had fallen asleep; but I shall call her again by and by. Friends, it is not a time of mourning. I want you to understand we do not mourn. We are proud that we had such a mother. We have a wonderful legacy left us.

One day mother sent for me. I went to see what she wanted, and she said she wanted to divide her things. I said, "Well, mother, we don't want anything you've

got; we want you. We have got you, and that's all we want." "Yes, but I want to do something." I said to her, "Then write out what you want, and I will carry it out." That didn't satisfy her. Finally she said, "Dwight, I want them *all* to have something." That was my mother, and that was the way she bound us to her.

Now, I have brought the old Bible, the family Bible, for it all came from that book. That is about the only book we had in the house when father died, and out of that book she taught us. And if my mother has been a blessing to this world, it is because she drank at this fountain. I have read twice at family worship, and will read here a few verses which she has marked.

"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her."

She has been a widow for fifty-four years, and yet she loved her husband the day she died as much as she ever did. I never heard one word and she never taught her children to do anything but just reverence our father. She loved him right up to the last.

"She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands."

That is my mother.

"She considereth a field and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good; her candle goeth not out by night."

Widow Moody's light has burned on that hill for fifty-four years to my knowledge. It has been burning there for fifty-four years, in that one room. We built a room for her, where she could be more comfortable, but she was not often there. There was just one room where she wanted to be. Her children were born there, her first sorrow came there, and that was where God had met her. That is the place she liked to stay, where her children liked to meet her, where she worked and toiled and wept.

"She stretcheth out her hands to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy."

Now, there is one thing about my mother, she never turned away any poor from her home. There was one time we got down to less than a loaf of bread. Some one came along hungry, and she says, "Now, children, shall I cut your slices a little thinner and give some to this person?" And we all voted for her to do it. That is the way she taught us.

"She is not afraid of the snow for her household; for all her household are clothed with scarlet."

She would let the neighbors' boys in, all over the house, and track in the snow; and when there was going to be a party she would say, "Who will stay with me? I will be all alone; why don't you ask them to come here?" In that way she kept them all at home, and knew where her children were. The door was never locked at night until she knew they were all in bed, safe and secure. Nothing was too hard for her if she could only spare her children.

The seven boys were like Hannibal, whose mother took him to the altar and made him swear vengeace on Rome. She took us to the altar and made us swear vengeance on whiskey, and everything that was an enemy to the human family; and we have been fighting it ever since and will to the end of our days.

My mother used to punish me; I honor her for that, I do not object to punishment. She used to send me out to get a stick. It would take a long time to get it, and then I used to get a dead stick if I could. She would try it and if it would break easily, then I had to go and get another. She was not in a hurry and did not tell me to hurry, because she knew all the time that I was being

punished. I would go out and be gone a long time. When I came in she would tell me to take off my coat, and then she would put the birch on; and I remember once I said, "That doesn't hurt." She put it on all the harder, and I never did that the second time. And once in awhile she would take me and she would say, "You know I would rather put this on myself than to put it on you." I would look up and see tears in her eyes. That was enough for me.

What more can I say? You have lived with her and you know about her. I want to give you one verse, her creed. Her creed was very short. Do you know what it was? I will tell you what it was, When everything went against her this was her stay, "My trust is in God." "My trust is in God." And when the neighbors would come in and tell her to bind out her children, she would say, "Not as long as I have these two hands." "Well," they would say, "you know one woman cannot bring up seven boys; they will turn up in jail, or with a rope around their necks." She toiled on, and none of us went to jail, and none of us has had a rope around his neck. And if every one had a mother like that mother, if the world was mothered by that kind of mothers, there would be no need for jails.

"Leave thy fatherless children; he will preserve them alive."

Here is a book (the little book of devotions); this and the Bible were about all the books she had in those days; and every morning she would stand us up and read out of this book. All through this book I find things marked.

Every Saturday night—we used to begin to observe the Sabbath at sundown Saturday night, and at sundown Sunday night we would run out and throw up our caps and let off our jubilant spirits—this is what she would give us Saturday night, and it has gone with me through life. Not all of it, I could not remember it all:

"How pleasant it is on Saturday night
When I've tried all the week to be good."

And on Sunday she always started us off to Sunday school. It was not a debatable question whether we should go or not. All the family attended.

I do not know, of course we do not know, whether the departed ones are conscious of what is going on on earth. If I knew that she was I would send her a message that we are coming on after her. If I could, I believe I would send a message after her, not only for the family, and the town, but for the Seminary. She was always so much interested in the young ladies of the Seminary. She

seemed to be as young as any of them, and entered into the joys of the young people just as much as any one. I want to say to the young ladies of the Seminary, who acted as maids of honor to escort my mother down to the church this morning, that I want you to trust my mother's Saviour.

I want to say to the young men of Mount Hermon, you are going to have a great honor to escort Mother to her last resting place. Her prayers for you ascended daily to the throne of grace. Now, I am going to give you the best I have; I am going to do the best I can; I am going to lay her away with her face toward Hermon.

I think she is one of the noblest characters this world has ever seen. She was true as sunlight; I never knew that woman to deceive me.

I want to thank Dr. Scofield for the comforting words he has brought us to-day. It is a day of rejoicing, not of regret. She went without a pain, without a struggle, just like a person going to sleep. And now we are to lay her body away to await His coming in resurrection power. When I see her in the morning she is to have a glorious body. The body Moses had on the Mount of Transfiguration was a better body than God buried on Pisgah. When we see Elijah he will have a glorious

body. That dear mother, when I see her again, is going to have a glorified body. (Looking at her face) God bless you, mother; we love you still. Death has only increased our love. Good-bye for a little while, mother. Let us pray.

Escorted by the Mount Hermon students the body of Mrs. Moody was then tenderly borne by her grandsons to its resting place on a beautiful knoll, adjoining Northfield cemetery, overlooking the lovely Connecticut valley, and lies awaiting the moment when "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

As the obsequies were closed there arose from more than one heart the prayer, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

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